



# THE ASSOCIATION

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## KEEPING THE ROAD OPEN, OR INVESTIGATING THE CRASH?

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A recent blog in the Road Crash Investigations and Reconstruction forum about doing a thorough at-scene investigation or quickly clearing the roadway got me thinking about the different points of view and the pressures put on crash investigators. The views expressed in the blog were for the most part well stated and covered both “sides” of the topic. Opinions and department policies were offered from U.S. and foreign investigators, with the consensus that the roadway should remain closed long enough to properly investigate the crash, diverting traffic as necessary for safety. Severities of injuries and fatalities have a bearing on what determines a proper investigation. The properly investigated crash may be taking photos, marking locations, gathering physical evidence and planning to come back to do measurements at another time, or it may be keeping the roadway closed while the measurements are taken, using the available and best system for that scene.

With the above in mind, most of us have been the investigator on that Friday afternoon, happy-go-home-time, multi-vehicle, multi-injury crash on one of the busiest streets in the area, right at the end of the shift. Shift command says that we need to get this roadway open right away, or we’ll have a huge traffic tie-up. You know there is no way to get everything done in a short time, and you tell the shift command that it will be awhile, which does not make him/her happy at all. No time to stand and discuss it. Do you do a hurry-up job, and hope you get what you need, or do you take a deep breath, and do what needs to be done?

Considerations involved in that decision include:

- Will someone die from this crash?
- Will someone’s life be altered because of this crash?
- Can the cause of the crash be explained properly to the families of those involved? To the insurance compa-

nies?

- To the courts?
- Are there alternate routes for traffic?
- What are the investigative skills of the personnel present?
- Is manpower available to do a thorough investigation? If not, can the scene be preserved until manpower is available?
- Can the scene be properly protected? Properly lighted?
- Will there be secondary crashes if we keep the road closed?

There are many other considerations that could be included.

One statement in the blog was that a crash scene is a crime scene, and should be investigated as such. Officers have been assigned to protect and preserve crime scenes for hours and days, but how about a late evening crash,

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## MORE ABOUT: KEEPING THE ROAD OPEN...

with limited lighting resources and low manpower? Will it be possible to keep the roadway crash/crime closed until daylight for a proper investigation? To highlight this question, a South African private crash specialist was contracted to go to a scene where there 9 fatalities. Although he was running lights and sirens all the way, it took 2 hours and 30 minutes to reach the site. During his drive, the investigator called officers at the site and asked that nothing be moved. Upon his arrival, the investigator found that the bodies had been removed, the vehicles were gone (positions not marked) and the road had been reopened. The positions of the bodies had been marked with crosses, but with no reference information. In the same area,

there was an ATTEMPTED robbery of an armored car at 5:30 a.m. There were shots fired, but no injuries, and no money was taken. A national highway was kept closed until 4:00 p.m. that afternoon. The bad guys got away. Which scene had the most human impact? Yes, the robbery attempt was very traumatic for the people in the armored car, but from the crash, the futures of the families of the 9 victims have been altered forever.

When is the time for the debate about keeping the roadway closed for a proper investigation or opening it to get traffic flowing? I believe it is long before the crash occurs. Granted, you can't cover all of the possible scenarios, but you can discuss with supervisors how a variety of

scenes could be handled and what protocols should be considered. Help them to understand that what appears to be a *routine* personal injury crash could turn into a fatality or an on-going court battle between the parties that would involve officer testimony. Make the case for doing the proper at-scene work that provides answers for grieving family members and that may keep the department from being sued for an incomplete or shoddy investigation. Work within your department to train all responders on the protocols. It should make your job a little easier when that major crash occurs. By doing all of this in advance, you create credibility for yourself and for crash investigators that will follow in your footsteps.



Insurance Scams gone amuck -

In May of 2008, Gerald Hardin and another person used a pole saw to cut off the hand of a third participant in a scheme...The three participants filed an insurance claim against a homeowner's policy and three accidental death and dismemberment policies and received over \$671,000. The three face insurance fraud charges, up to 20 yrs in prison.

Source: The Business Insider website.



IACAI members (from left to right) Director Mark Helms, President Kip Shuter, Director Tim Spencer, and member Richard Brothers discuss the day's events between crash tests held at IPTM's Special Problems in Crash Reconstruction. Two different crash tests were held that day, both right angle collisions.

## WORLDS MOST EXPENSIVE CRASH

Just when you thought your day was going bad....

In December, 2011, in only what could be referred to as perhaps the world's most expensive car crash occurred on the Chugoku highway in Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi, Japan.

Several drivers of a exotic sports car club were out for a scenic tour of the area when they encountered a slower moving Toyota Pruis on the highway. The lead car, a Ferrari, came up on the slower Pruis, and being unable to slow down in time, struck the rear of the Pruis. The drivers of the other sports cars following the lead Ferrari also failed to slow down in time and ultimately crashed into each other and everything around them! All told, 10 very exotic sports cars were damaged, including Eight Ferraris, a Lamborghini, and a Mercedes-Benz. The cost for this excursion? Over \$4 million dollars in damage and charges against the 10 sports car drivers for excessive speed and other related charges. What happened to the Pruis? It sustained minor rear end damage and was driven from the scene...

*The most expensive* single car crash occurred on July, 2012, when Christopher Cox, who was participating in a 5-day tour of France, was struck by another car. The car Cox was driving was a Ferrari GTO 250, which was one of only 36 Ferraris build between 1962 and 1963. The value of this vehicle was reported to be \$30 million *before the crash...*



We honor Darwin Award Recipient Ecco L'allegro Salvatore, 49, who was unceremoniously blown to bits after deciding to weld on a gasoline tanker. The tanker exploded, sending his remains flying 400 meters through the air.

Source: The Darwin Award Website

## ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION TRAINING

**IPTM** <http://www.iptm.org/Schedule.aspx>

9/23-10/4/2013 **Advanced Traffic Crash Invest.**  
\$950 Jacksonville, FL  
10/7-18/2013 **Traffic Crash Reconstruction**  
\$950 Jacksonville, FL  
10/7-11/2013 **Basic Watercraft Crash Invest.**  
\$795 Belle Isle, FL  
10/21-24/2013 **Heavy Vehicle ECM Data Use**  
\$1195 Jacksonville, FL  
10/21-25/2013 **Event Data Recorder Use**  
\$695 Jacksonville, FL  
11/4-8/2013 **Motorcycle Crash Investigation**  
\$795 Jacksonville, FL  
12/2-6/2013 **Pedestrian/Bicycle Crash Invest.**  
\$795 Jacksonville, FL

To Register, visit the website or call: 904-620-4786

*Don't forget* IATAI's 27th Annual Traffic Crash Reconstruction Conference, September 18-20, 2013, At the Par-A-Dice Hotel & Casino, East Peoria, IL The cost is: \$300 for IATAI members, \$400 for non-members.

**NUCPS** [www.scs.northwestern.edu/program-areas/public-safety/courses/crs\\_list.asp](http://www.scs.northwestern.edu/program-areas/public-safety/courses/crs_list.asp)

9/9-20/2013 **Crash Investigation I**  
\$975 Evanston, IL  
9/9-13/2013 **Motorcycle Crash Reconstruction**  
\$825 Evanston, IL  
9/23-10/4/2013 **Crash Investigation II**  
\$975 Evanston, IL  
9/23-27/2013 **Vehicle Dynamics**  
\$TBD Florence, KY  
10/7-11/2013 **Vehicle Dynamics**  
\$775 Evanston, IL  
9/30-10/11/2013 **Traffic Crash Reconstruction**  
\$TBD Florence, KY  
10/14-25/2013 **Traffic Crash Reconstruction**  
\$1050 Evanston, IL  
10/21-11/1/2013 **Crash Investigation II**  
\$TBD Fort Wayne, IN

To Register, visit the website or call: 800-323-4011

## IACAI PARTICIPATES IN THE FIRST TRAFFIC CRASH RECON SUMMIT

Recently, a special event of sorts took place during IPTM's Special Problems in Crash Reconstruction conference, which was held at the Trade Winds Island resort at St. Pete's Beach, Florida. What was so special about this event? It was the first gathering of leaders representing 17 different Traffic Crash Associations from across the United States and Canada. The Summit was organized by Illinois Association of Technical Accident Investigation's (IATAI) Treasurer Susan Shigemura, with the purpose of gathering leaders/representatives from traffic crash associations from across North America and discuss ways of sharing information and ideas on how to improve their respective associations, ways to better serve their membership, and how to get the associations to work together. The meetings took place at several different times during the IPTM conference, with IPTM generously providing the summit meeting space. During the summit meetings, leaders heard about ways to set up crash testing from Russell Strickland and Dr. Jeremy Dailey and the various needs required for the event, including handing insurance, advertisement



Leaders from Crash Investigation/Reconstruction Organizations representing 18 States gather for a group photograph during crash testing day at IPTM's Special Problems in Crash Reconstruction conference at St. Pete's Beach, FL.

and procurement of the vehicles to be crashed. IPTM's Cammy Pucci spoke on how to negotiate hotel contract rates for guest rooms and meeting halls, how to market and advertise training events and a host of other issues! Greg Vandenburg, from ACTAR, gave a presentation on ACTAR's purpose and membership criteria. Greg spoke about testing procedures and costs associated with taking the test. The test consists of a written test and a practical skills test that takes up much of the day. He addressed problems found with students attempting to take the test - this includes not having basic drawing skills and not using basic investigation techniques during the practical phase

of the test.

Each association shared information related to their annual dues, training seminars/conferences, and information dissemination. It was good to know that the IACAI was still a good investment and still provided much information in the form of newsletters, as compared to some associations who did not. The Summit proved to be a great wealth of information for all who attended. The consensus of the group was to continue the Summit next year and perhaps even expand the meetings in order to share even more information!

The IACAI was represented by President Kip Shuter and by Secretary David McElhaney.



**Stupid, stupid, stupid!**  
A New Jersey police officer collected almost \$10,000 after filing a false car theft report on his own vehicle. He'd probably have gotten away with it if he hadn't continued to drive the "stolen" vehicle for another 3 years after it was reported stolen!

Source: The Business Insider website.



**IACAI SKILL REVIEW**

This issue of the IACAI Skill Review involves lessons learned in Crash III.

Answers will appear in the next edition of the Association.

1. A body's change of position with respect to some fixed point is known as:
  - A. Acceleration
  - B. Distance
  - C. Velocity
  - D. Speed
  
2. A measurable interval or duration within which an action is taken is known as:
  - A. Time
  - B. Constant Velocity
  - C. Acceleration
  - D. Coefficient of Friction
  
3. The total distance traveled in a given time period, divided by the time period is known as:
  - A. Acceleration
  - B. Average Velocity
  - C. Coefficient of Friction
  - D. None of the Above
  
4. The depth of distortion in a vehicle struck by another vehicle is known as:
  - A. Contact Damage
  - B. Induced Damage
  - C. Collapse
  - D. Damage Overlap
  
5. Thrust which is not toward the Center of Mass of a vehicle is called:
  - A. Concentric Force
  - B. Supraconircular Force
  - C. Eccentric Force
  - D. Centrifical Force
  
6. Momentum is a \_\_\_\_\_ quantity.
  - A. Scalar
  - B. Vector
  - C. Motion
  - D. Magnitude
  
7. The Law of Conservation of Momentum can be used to determine:
  - A. Post impact vehicle speeds
  - B. Pre-impact vehicle speeds
  - C. Departure angles for vehicles
  - D. Collision vehicle speeds

Answers from last issue  
of the IACAI skill review:

1. C
2. D
3. D
4. D
5. Forward
6. B
7. B



## SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT - PLEASE POST -

The Indiana Association of Certified Accident Investigators will be sponsoring a seminar on

### "Investigating and Managing Large Scale Crash Scenes"

Wednesday, October 9, 2013 0900-1500 hrs

at the

Plainfield Recreational Center

651 Vestal Road, Plainfield, Indiana, 46142

*Not many crash investigators have ever had to deal with a Large Scale Crash Scene. Learn from those who've experienced it and discover the process of investigating a major, multiple vehicle crash. Uncover the successes and the errors made during the investigation.*

For a map of the location, please visit : [https://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s\\_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=651+Vestal+Road,+Plainfield,+IN+46168&aq=&sl=37.0625,-95.677068&ssp=52.815565,126.5625&vpsrc=6&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=651+Vestal+Rd,+Plainfield,+Indiana+46168&ll=39.70405,-86.415367&spn=0.025324,0.061798&t=m&z=15&ei=kYwwUs7tFckGwgHfvYHwAw&pw=2](https://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=651+Vestal+Road,+Plainfield,+IN+46168&aq=&sl=37.0625,-95.677068&ssp=52.815565,126.5625&vpsrc=6&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=651+Vestal+Rd,+Plainfield,+Indiana+46168&ll=39.70405,-86.415367&spn=0.025324,0.061798&t=m&z=15&ei=kYwwUs7tFckGwgHfvYHwAw&pw=2)

**Cost: \$50 for IACAI members; \$75 for non-members**

**\*No advanced registration is required.\***

Registration begins at 08:30am

Questions regarding this seminar may be directed to IACAI

President Kip Shuter

email: [kshuter@warsaw.in.gov](mailto:kshuter@warsaw.in.gov)

**- PLEASE POST -**

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